

Dogs and Deer - As any dog owner will tell you dogs and deer do not mix. Even the gentlest of dogs have such a powerful instinct to chase deer that it is almost impossible to stop them. However, allowing your dog to attack a deer is a criminal offence and, as reported in the Sutton & Croydon Guardian last month, a dog walker was convicted and fined £602 after his red setter attacked and fatally wounded a deer in Richmond Park. In another issue of the same newspaper there was a report of a second chase incident which resulted in injury to a child. There are deer in Selsdon Wood and we have had attacks so dog walkers please be vigilant. If you spot a deer please put your dog on the lead immediately to prevent a chase and perhaps an attack. We have not had a fatal attack in Selsdon Wood for many years. Let's all try hard to keep it that way.

A Commemorative Shrine - Walkers in Field 1 will have seen the pompoms tied to the tree with the collection of stones below. This is a memorial to someone who committed suicide in Liverpool in 2018 who has become a poster girl for Suicide Awareness. She would have been 29 years old on February 13th see <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/heartbreaking-story-behind-colourful-pompom-15826071>. We do not know who placed the memorial. We have been happy to leave it there throughout February but will clear it away at the start of March.



Prickles on Holly Leaves - I received a response to the Holly section in last month's newsletter. Chris Green wrote to say that he had learnt recently that the typical prickly leaves only appear at low levels on Holly - where they are at risk of being eaten. Leaves higher in the bush or tree are not prickly. Intrigued by this I checked out some of the Hollies in our wood on my next walk. While there does seem to be a tendency for some of the upper leaves to be less prickly it is by no means a universal rule and on the two tallest Hollies in the wood - in Linden Glade and on Farleigh Border - there are many prickly leaves at the tops of the trees. This piece in the National Geographic <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/12/121220-holly-leaves-prickly-plants-science/> seems to suggest that the variation in prickliness may come about when the bush is browsed. Although we do have some deer there are not many and so few of the trees have probably been browsed. This is an interesting idea which is worth exploring further. Take a careful look at the Holly next time you walk in the wood and let me know what you think.

Information Leaflets & QR Codes - You will have noticed that we now have dispenser boxes at all entrances with copies of our FSW Information leaflets and maps for walkers to take. We replenish these regularly but we now have a new feature, a QR code on each box so that users of smart phones can access the leaflets by scanning, thus saving on paper - and our costs, as we pay almost £200 per 1000, the magnificent number we have issued in 2020 and early 2021. You may also have noticed the QR codes on each of the guide posts to our red and green walks. These provide pages of information about the trail and an accompanying map. For all QR codes just scan the code with your smartphone and a link to FSW will appear. The original paper guide and the QR trails may also be accessed from the Walks page of our website. If you have accessed the information leaflet or used the QR trails we would be very interested in your feedback - do please get in touch via phone, email or website.

The Family Walk on 6th March and the FSW AGM on 29th March are cancelled due to covid - However, The annual reports from the Chair and Treasurer will also be posted on the FSW website in due course. The only major item for discussion, had there been an AGM, is our proposed pond project. Discussion of this matter will be conducted via an email group. If you would like to be included in that group please contact me at govierh@gmail.com

Brilliant Butterflies Project to Create New Butterfly Habitat at Selsdon Wood - Working alongside Friends of Selsdon Wood Brilliant Butterflies are excited to announce the creation of a new 'butterfly bank' in the car park field, with the work due to be completed in mid-late March. See overleaf for more details and a plan of the location.

Easily Accessible Butterfly Bank in Field 1

The bank will be constructed from imported chalk to create the best conditions for wildflowers to flourish as the low nutrient chalk prevents coarse grasses from dominating. The low south facing bank is designed to create warm conditions that many butterflies require with a flat chalk area in front.

A chalk grassland seed mix will be sown to introduce the desired species that are found in the local area. The wildflower habitat will take a year or two to establish and will provide a wide variety of caterpillar (larval) food-plants and nectar sources to support butterflies and pollinating insects. These will include common butterfly species such as Meadow Brown and Common Blue and the nationally rare Small Blue (shown below) which will colonise from nearby Hutchinson's Bank once the foodplant, kidney vetch, is established.



The seeding is supplemented by wildflower planting using small 'plug' plants to speed up the process and provide flowering plants in the first year. This is a fun activity that local volunteers can get involved in. The Friends of Selsdon Wood will be helping to maintain and monitor the new habitat so do get in touch if you would like to help out. We will also be offering free butterfly workshops providing more information on butterfly identification and recording (Dates TBC).



Project Background - Many butterflies and insects are in serious trouble; the *State of the UK's Butterflies 2015* report evidenced that 76% of species have declined over the last 40 years. Launched in September 2019, [Brilliant Butterflies](#) is a partnership between London Wildlife Trust, the Natural History Museum and Butterfly Conservation, funded by a Dream Fund Award, thanks to players of the People's Postcode Lottery.

Brilliant Butterflies is partnering with influential stakeholders and local communities to restore a nationally rare habitat, chalk grassland, and create new homes for butterflies and insects across nature reserves, road verges, housing estates, and parks in south Croydon and Bromley.

Project Progress - Our locations are mostly based around sites which London Wildlife Trust have been managing on behalf of Croydon Council for over 30 years, such as Hutchinson's Bank by New Addington. Across the project we have worked to engage with local communities on our volunteering programme, our citizen science training programme, nature-based activities and events. We are working with local residents to spread the word of the value of chalk grassland in London, which the borough has a significant amount of this internationally scarce habitat. For more details on events and training activities sign up to our monthly events newsletter on the webpage via the link above.

With the impacts of Covid -19, some elements of our engagement activities have temporarily been on hold or have moved to online delivery. We have however been progressing on habitat restoration and creation work. Working with Council Officers, we have scoped suitable sites and drafted proposals for new chalk grassland habitat providing homes for wildflowers, butterflies and other pollinating insects. To date we have delivered 17 of these sites between Coulsdon and New Addington with local volunteers helping to seed and plant the new habitats. We are now planning further sites, including the butterfly bank at Selsdon Wood, to help create a 'Nature Recovery Network' across the project area. More information and a map of our sites can be viewed [here](#).

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